

**Minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting
Monday, October 10, 2005 – 7:00 p.m.**

1. CONVENE: 7:06 p.m.
2. FLAG SALUTE: Vice President Cook
3. ROLL CALL: President Cunningham, Vice President Cook, Kohlstrand, Lynch, Mariani, McNamara, and Piziali.

Also present were Supervising Planner Cynthia Eliason, Deputy City Attorney Julie Harryman, Supervising Planner Andrew Thomas, Bruce Knopf, Development Services, Planner II Dennis Brighton.

4. MINUTES: Minutes for the meeting of September 26, 2005.

Ms. Mariani noted that the following votes indicated that she was absent when she was in fact in attendance, and that they should be changed to reflect her presence and Vice President Cook's absence: Page 1, Item 4 (Minutes); Items 8-A, 9-A and 9-B.

M/S Kohlstrand/Piziali to approve the minutes for the meeting of September 26, 2005, as corrected.

AYES – 6; NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 1 (Cook)

5. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION:

President Cunningham advised that a speaker slip had been received for Item 8-A.

M/S Kohlstrand/Cook and unanimous to remove Item 8-A from the Consent Calendar and to place it on the Regular Agenda.

AYES – 7; NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

7. 2005-2006 ELECTION OF PLANNING BOARD OFFICERS:
 (Continued from the meeting of September 26, 2005.)

M/S Piziali/Cook and unanimous to nominate Andrew Cunningham for President of the Planning Board.

AYES – 7; NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

M/S Cunningham/Piziali and unanimous to nominate Anne Cook for Vice President of the Planning Board

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Board.

AYES – 7; NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

8. CONSENT CALENDAR:

8-A. **Annual Report on General Plan (ATh).** A report regarding implementation of policies and objectives of the 1991 General Plan pursuant to the California Government Code.

M/S Kohlstrand/ Cook and unanimous to remove Item 8-A from the Consent Calendar and to place it on the Regular Agenda.

AYES – 7; NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

Mr. Thomas summarized the staff report.

The public hearing was opened.

Ms. Ani Dimusheva, 2911 Calhoun Street, spoke in favor of a Civic Center Specific Plan, called for by the General Plan but has not been developed in the past 14 years. She had objected to the Use Permits granted to the theater and parking garage, which she believed was contradictory to the General Plan. She noted that the City Council adopted the Citywide Retail Policy and Strategy, which she believed included the Cineplex and garage. She was concerned that these policies will continue to outweigh the importance of other elements in the General Plan, such as the unaddressed Civic Center Plan. She believed that the configuration of the theater and parking garage left no room for identifiable Civic Center, and cannot imagine where a half-acre urban pocket park would go. If the Cineplex project did not go through, she encouraged the Planning Board to consider developing a City Center plan. She acknowledged the importance of economic interests, but was also concerned with open areas in public spaces.

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. McNamara regarding the current status of a Civic Center Plan, Mr. Thomas replied that there was nothing currently in the works. He noted that Ms. Dimusheva was correct in that there was a policy recommending a Civic Center Specific Plan in the 1991 General Plan. He added that had not been a priority for the City over the last 14 years, and that it was common for General Plans to have many very good ideas but that they sometimes conflicted with each other. He noted that the implementation of these plans is decided in the annual budget process. He added that the Civic Center Specific Plan had not been a budget priority, and noted that did not preclude its inclusion in the future.

Ms. Kohlstrand ~~inquired whether~~ *noted that* the public plaza discussion had been part of the Park Street Revitalization discussion, and whether ~~it could be placed there had been any further~~

discussion about placing that plaza across the street from City Hall

Ms. Eliason noted that the small structure was a historic structure.

Mr. Thomas advised that the 1991 General Plan discussed the linkage of spaces, design and uses, and that there were several visions of a civic center area. He added that not every civic center must be organized around a large open space.

Vice President Cook noted that there was some desire to have an outside public meeting area that created a public presence in the area. There had also been discussion in incorporate public spaces in the City's alleyways, such as Park Street. She noted that the waterfront public access studies had been halted midway through the process. She believed the Planning Board should be more strategically involved, and realized the budgeting process directed these processes. She acknowledged that the staffing situation was also a constraint on accomplishing these goals.

Mr. Lynch would not advocate a Specific Plan in this case, and noted that they had been recommendations in the 1980s. He added that the development of a Specific Plan was very arduous, similar to adopting a minor General Plan. He agreed with the efforts that the City has taken thus far, especially the committees and task forces. He suggested that as those documents come forward, the City seek ways to incorporate those documents in the community's initiatives. He added that a Specific Plan would be time-, money- and staff-intensive, as well as legally intensive. He noted that there were substantive differences between "recommended" and "required," as well as "should" and "shall."

Ms. Mariani noted that she attended several Downtown Vision meetings as a Greater Alameda Business Association (GABA) member, and that she recalled seeing the picture of the downtown City Center. She inquired whether that was in the Downtown Vision report, and added that she would like to see those documents resurface.

President Cunningham recalled that the top ten priorities were agreed upon following that process, and were considered to be policy directives.

Ms. Eliason noted that she could make those documents available.

Ms. Kohlstrand noted that the City was more than 50% towards its housing goals in the Very Low Income category, but that the other categories hadn't fared so well. She inquired how the City intended to achieve those goals, and what strategies and programs were in place to do so. Mr. Thomas replied that Alameda Point and Catellus were the major pieces of the program, and that Alameda Point alone had 612 affordable housing units, spread from Very Low to Moderate. He anticipated that a proposal from Catellus would come forward in the next year to re-entitle a portion of the office portion for residential, including a variety of affordable housing. From a Housing Element perspective, the land must be available, and the land at Alameda Point is not currently available.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Lynch regarding ABAG's letter to the City stating the next round of housing numbers, Mr. Thomas replied that they were in the final negotiations, and were 90% sure the timeframe would be extended but the deal was not finalized.

In response to an inquiry by Vice President Cook regarding the timeframe of the Planning Board hearing the Alameda Point issue, Mr. Thomas replied that the preliminary concept would be taken to ARRA first. The negotiations with the Navy are the critical element, and staff has been meeting with the Navy several times a week.

President Cunningham noted that there had been a presentation about sustainable design several years ago, and would like a discussion with the Board and public addressing stewardship of the Island and its resources.

M/S McNamara/Cook to recommend acceptance of the status report regarding implementation of policies and objectives of the 1991 General Plan pursuant to the California Government Code.

AYES – 7; NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

- 8-B. **DR05-0045, PF05-0001, V05-0008; John Knowles - 2416 Central Avenue (AT).** Applicant requests Major Design Review approval for the construction of a new 5,800 square foot two-story commercial building in a portion of an existing parking lot located between the buildings occupied by the Starbucks cafe and Gallagher and Lindsey offices. The applicant also requests the payment of parking in-lieu fees for sixteen off-street parking spaces; the existing parking lot will be re-striped to maintain all of the existing parking spaces. The proposal also requires Variances to AMC Subsection 30-7.10(a).1 and 30-7.10(a).2 for reductions to required landscaped setbacks between unenclosed parking spaces next to public sidewalks, buildings, and property lines. The property is located within a C-C T, Community Commercial Theatre Combining District. **(Staff requests a continuance to the meeting of October 24, 2005.)**

M/S Piziali/Mariani and unanimous to continue this item to the meeting of October 24, 2005.

AYES – 7; NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0

9. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

- 9-A. **UP05-0015/MDR05-0178 – Pamela Nobel for Cingular Wireless – 3001 Otis Drive (Krusi Park) (DB).** A request to approve a Use Permit and Minor Design Review to replace three light poles with three 50 foot high light pole/antennas for a total of six painted metal monopoles. The antennas would encircle the existing tennis courts within Krusi Park. The application also includes a 13-foot by 16-foot utility enclosure surrounded by a 6 foot fence and landscaping. A Use Permit and Minor Design Review is required by AMC Sections 30-4.19 (c) and (d) for any structure and above ground utility installation in an O, Open Space, Zoning District.

Mr. Brighton summarized this staff report. Staff recommended approval of this item.

The public hearing was opened.

There were no speaker slips.

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

Ms. McNamara inquired how the proposed equipment enclosure building compared to the existing structure.

Mr. Bruce Knopf, Development Services, replied that the existing enclosure on the westerly side of the tennis courts was approximately 9 by 16 feet. The proposed structure is slightly larger (13 by 16 feet), and would be located at the edge of the park in a redwood-fenced enclosure that will be screened with landscaping; it would be located adjacent to the maintenance shed. He noted that a public meeting had been held on August 30, 2005, attended by six residents, two of whom were members of the Recreation & Park Commission. The attendees had questions about safety, and information about the radio frequency and emissions report was presented. One person believed the cellular companies should get together and share facilities; the other members did not share any opinions in particular. It was suggested that sports netting be installed over the redwood fenced equipment enclosure it catch Frisbees and balls; he agreed that could be added to the resolution. It was also suggested that the light poles be painted black to blend in with the surroundings; staff agreed that the existing galvanized light pole would blend in better than a painted pole. Staff believed the cables that run into the poles should be screened.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Kohlstrand regarding consolidated service, Mr. Knopf displayed the map of existing cell sites in town, with the exception of the two new sites at the Mastick Senior Center and the subject site at Krusi Park. He added that there were technical reasons for separate service sites, and consolidated service in one location or on one pole would provide poorer coverage as the antennas were located lower on the pole. He added that even cell phones were low-power radio transmitters, and that these were low-powered sites.

Ms. McNamara expressed concern about the encroachment of these equipment pieces on open space. She believed this example illustrated that concern because there were two locations on this site, and noted that protection of park space was very important.

Mr. Knopf noted that park space was protected on an individual basis, and cited Lincoln Park as an example; that site was never brought to the public or the Board because the use of the park did not respect its space and layout. He added that the Recreation and Park Commission deliberated very carefully about these issues, and voted in support of this recommendation. Staff believed this proposal represented an improvement in service in the area, added revenue, as well as added cell phone coverage, which can be a safety issue.

M/S Mariani/Lynch to adopt Planning Board Resolution No. PB-05-42 to approve a Use Permit and Minor Design Review to replace three light poles with three 50 foot high light pole/antennas for a total of six painted metal monopoles. The antennas would encircle the existing tennis courts within Krusi Park. The application also includes a 13-foot by 16-foot utility enclosure surrounded by a 6 foot fence and landscaping. A Use Permit and Minor Design Review is required by AMC Sections 30-4.19 (c) and (d) for any structure and above ground utility installation in an O, Open Space, Zoning District. The following modifications will be added:

1. A netted enclosure over the equipment space;
2. The cable lines will be screened from view.

AYES – 6; NOES – 1 (McNamara); ABSTAIN – 0

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

Ms. Eliason advised that a letter from Carol Ireland regarding the Cineplex was placed on the dais.

11. BOARD COMMUNICATION:

- a. Oral Status Report regarding the Northern Waterfront Plan (Vice-President Cook).

Vice President Cook noted that there had been no further meetings since her last report.

- b. Oral Status Report regarding the Golf Course Committee (Board Member Piziali).

Mr. Piziali noted that there had been no further meetings since his last report.

- c. Oral Status Report regarding the Oakland/Chinatown Advisory Committee (Board member Mariani).

Ms. Mariani noted that they had discussed options and ways to improve traffic through Chinatown, and how it affects Alameda, downtown Oakland and Chinatown. They planned to prepare a formal resolution to present to both the Alameda and Oakland Planning Boards. They planned to make concrete suggestions on how to achieve those goals.

Mr. Lynch noted that this was a stipulated effort pursuant to filed litigation. He was very concerned with the authority of this body, given the type of development currently taking place in Oakland, has taken place since the body was formed, and will take place. He noted that development has taken place rapidly, and added that focus was primarily placed on Alameda, which he found regretful. He noted that Chinatown was only one community that suffered from the traffic congestion, and wanted the proceedings to be fair to the citizens of Alameda.

Ms. Mariani noted that a wide variety of issues were discussed, and believed that the committee was working well together; everyone realized their proper role in the process. She complimented Mr. Thomas on his skills in facilitating.

Mr. Lynch was very concerned that the Port of Oakland was not involved in this body, because the Port was the major developer.

Ms. Mariani noted she would bring that issue before the Committee.

Vice President Cook noted that the Chamber of Commerce would hold a public presentation on the Oak to Ninth Project, and shared Mr. Lynch's concerns regarding the effect of Oakland's buildout on traffic in Alameda.

Ms. Eliason noted that Mr. Thomas would be able to provide the details to answer Vice President

Cook's question. She noted that while all of Alameda's access was through Oakland, Oakland could also object to Alameda's development, and added that there was a delicate balance between the two municipalities.

- d. Oral Status Report regarding the Transportation subcommittee (Board member Kohlstrand).

Ms. Kohlstrand advised that there had been no meetings since her last report, and that the next meeting would be held Wednesday, October 12, 2005, at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers. The street system classification would be discussed.

Ms. Kohlstrand noted that a letter from Marilyn Schumacher had been received regarding Mr. Edwards, and requested clarification. Ms. Eliason replied that Mr. Edwards had applied for a Design Review for an art studio behind an existing duplex on property that he owns. He had expressed frustration to Ms. Schumacher, who was a member of the Customer Service Initiative (CSI). His plans were shown to the CSI to demonstrate how the process had not worked in this case; changes were made in the project each time it was brought forward, requiring new staff review.

Ms. McNamara expressed concern about the lack of planning staff, and had not seen any movement in that direction. She inquired whether the Board could do anything to bring the staffing levels up.

Ms. Eliason noted that the City was recruiting for a new Planning and Building Director. Authorization was received to hire a Planner I on a temporary basis to assist with the counter work and minor Design Reviews, freeing the more senior planners up for more challenging projects. The position previously held by Jerry Cormack was frozen, and Judith Altschuler's position has been eliminated.

Mr. Lynch noted that it has recently been difficult to hire experienced planners statewide, and that the market was currently very competitive. He agreed that the Planning Department was woefully understaffed. He noted that the method by which Alameda receives funds has been affected by the relative lack of development in the commercial sector. Municipalities who have done so are more able to compete economically for planners and other staff members, including safety and recreational services.

A discussion of the budget and staffing process ensued.

Ms. Kohlstrand requested a presentation before the Board addressing the staffing needs. In response to the Planning Board's request, Ms. Eliason noted that she would prepare some permit information for the Board. She noted that the Design Review loads were often cyclical.

The Board also wanted a discussion with the City Manager or the appropriate representative about the staffing needs and shortage, to which Ms. Eliason responded that a discussion would be arranged.

Mr. Piziali noted that it was difficult for the City to generate revenue without staff to handle the incoming business.

12. STAFF COMMUNICATION:

Ms. Eliason noted that an appeal was received for the Cineplex Use Permit, which would be brought before the City Council on November 1, 2005.

13. ADJOURNMENT: 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory J. McFann, Acting Secretary
Planning & Building Department

These minutes were approved at the October 24, 2005, Planning Board meeting. This meeting was audio and video taped.